

# SCTS Ionescu Scholarship for non-NTN doctors

I was sincerely honoured to have been selected as the recipient of the SCTS Ionescu Scholarship for non NTN doctors earlier this year. I am extremely indebted to Mr Ionescu and the Society of Cardiothoracic Surgery for this award.

**Andreas Paschalis**

After completing my training in cardiothoracic surgery and successfully passing the Greek and European Board Cardiothoracic exams, I felt it would be an interesting opportunity to broaden my horizons with a Master in Business Administration-- MBA in Healthcare. I was successfully accepted by Sheffield University to start earlier this year as an Executive MBA student through its international Faculty. The funding I have received from the scholarship was of great help in paying my educational expenses.

As a clinician all these years I was focused on my patients, their operation and their recovery. I was not really interested what was happening around my department, who was taking the decisions, who was paying for the material I was using, who was bringing my sterile instruments in theatre and why as a department they should achieve target goals.

Almost a year after starting the MBA I believe my way of thinking in many aspects has changed. Keeping and evolving my surgical skills, I can now think more broadly and make suggestions about how my department should be operating.

The first year's modules of the MBA covered business economics, financial and management accounting, logistics and supply chain management, information management, strategy formation and processes--operations developing. By the sound of these words they are by far away from any familiar medical terminology. This is actually misleading as if you actually apply these terms in healthcare everything matches.

After attending the MBA modules, you need to submit an assignment relevant to its



topic. Most of my assignments were based either on the NHS or my department's operation. This gave me the opportunity to start investigating several problems we were facing as a department and I tried to suggest solutions. I found myself interviewing our theatre manager in order to identify any logistics issues (logistics and supply chain management) and organising meetings with the ward managers to collect information about any ward malfunctioning (information management). I followed the patient flow from the A&E admission until their discharge, identify processes and operational bottlenecks, investigate academic literature and make suggestions for improvement.

I have recently been appointed as a Locum Cardiothoracic Consultant at Wythenshawe Hospital and participated in meetings that took place in Manchester where the merging of the two cardiothoracic departments was discussed. These were

meetings mainly of clinicians discussing managerial issues and how their voice should be taken into account in the decision making. I was surprised but pleased at the same time when the consensus was to make a strategy plan from the clinician point of view and not leave it to financial managers.

The role of an NHS Cardiothoracic Consultant is mainly to treat his patients but there is also an element of management in order to succeed in its commitments. I feel that the MBA in Healthcare is giving me the appropriate qualifications to improve my personal development as a consultant and as a leader.

Once again I would like to express my gratitude to Mr Ionescu, the SCTS education committee and especially Mr Shah and Mr Lewis of awarding me with the scholarship and supporting a non-NTN doctor to achieve his goals. I am also indebted to Professor Yonan who supported my application. ■